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INFO RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 3435
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STATE FOR SCA/INS, PM/CBM, PM/PRO

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SUBJ: MEDIA REACTION: PDAS MOON'S VISIT AND DEALING WITH THE MAOISTS

¶1. SUMMARY: Nepal's popular English daily The Kathmandu Post (circulation: 30,000) on Friday, January 22, published an editorial titled "Fair Deal" which commends the "nuanced U.S. position on the rights abuses during the time of insurgency." According to the editorial, "the U.S. stance towards Nepal is in keeping with the Obama administration's policy of rapprochement towards any side, state or non-state actors, willing to come to the negotiating table. This is evident in its policy shift towards a more diplomatic approach, even with disagreeable regimes."

¶2. EXCERPTS: "At the end of his four-day Nepal stay, U.S. Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for South and Central Asian Affairs Patrick Moon seemed to be hitting all the right notes. While he reiterated the need for flexibility and compromises on the part of the political parties to draft the constitution by the May 28 deadline, Moon put equal onus on the Maoist and non-Maoist actors. More significantly, Moon spoke of his talks with Maoist Chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal where the two discussed, among other things, removal of Maoists from the U.S. terrorist list and the clear steps the US would like to see the Maoists take towards that goal. In doing so, he left open channels for future dialogue between the U.S. and the Maoists."

¶3. "We welcome the willingness of the U.S. to engage the Maoists, an important actor in the peace process and without whose cooperation, as the U.S. seems to have understood, neither can the constitution be drafted on time, nor the peace process taken to a logical conclusion. The nuanced U.S. position on the rights abuses during the time of insurgency was evident as Moon called upon both Nepal Army and the Maoists to address the cases of rights abuses from the insurgency years."

¶4. "...The U.S. stance towards Nepal is in keeping with the Obama administration's policy of rapprochement towards any side, state or non-state actors, willing to come to the negotiating table. This is evident in its policy shift towards a more diplomatic approach, even with disagreeable regimes. Whether there has been a shift in its Nepal policy or not, we believe mending the frayed ties with the Nepali Maoists will stand the U.S. in good stead for future engagement with both the Maoist party as well as any future Nepali government."

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